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U. S. ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

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STATEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
AND THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

In the absence of a safeguarded disarmament agreement, preparations are under way by the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of Defense for a series of nuclear tests to begin in April, 1958, at the Eniwetok Proving Ground in the Pacific. The United States repeatedly has stated its willingness to suspend nuclear tests as part of a disarmament agreement. Until such an agreement is attained, continued development of nuclear weapons is essential to the defense of the United States and of the Free World.

The forthcoming series will advance the development of weapons for defense against aggression whether air-borne, missile-borne or otherwise mounted. Information on the effects of weapons will be obtained for military and civilian defense use. Test operations will be governed by the declaration made in the Bermuda Communique on March 24, 1957, of the intention of the United States "to conduct nuclear tests only in such manner as will keep world radiation from rising to more than a small fraction of the levels that might be hazardous."

An important objective of the tests will be the further development of nuclear weapons with greatly reduced radioactive fallout so that radiation hazard may be restricted to the military target. This principle was first proved in the Pacific test series of 1956.

A United Nations agency will be invited to designate an international group to observe one of the detonations involving limited fallout and studies are under way to determine the instrumentation which will facilitate their observation without making

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disclosures which would compromise restricted weapon information in violation of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954. Observation by news media representatives will be provided for in a manner to be announced later.

As in the past series, a control area surrounding the proving grounds will be established to safeguard air and sea traffic and will be defined well in advance of the commencement of operations.